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Report: Shahak won't seek fourth year

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

In an unprecedented move, Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak will not seek to have his term extended to a full fourth year, Channel 2 reported.

The report attributed Shahak's decision to discontent over his working relationship with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

According to the TV report, Shahak is to inform Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai that he is not interested in extending his term by a full year, when they are to meet later this week to discuss his future with the IDF.

Shahak telephoned Netanyahu last night to deny the report, Israel Radio reported.

The IDF Spokesman released a statement last night saying that, contrary to the Channel 2 report, no meeting has been set in the coming days between Shahak and Mordechai regarding his service.

"The report did not come from the chief of general staff and does not reflect his opinion," the statement said.

Mordechai's spokesman Avi Benayahu reacted to the report by saying "only that the defense minister had not yet concluded the appointments in the general staff."

It would be the first time that a chief of general staff did not seek a fourth year, which has traditionally been granted as a matter of course.

The unattributed television report said Shahak would likely step down on Israel's 50th independence day, seven months short of the end of his fourth year, so



Amnon Lipkin-Shahak

that his replacement would be able to put together a 1999 working plan.

In a briefing with military reporters just prior to Independence Day, Shahak, 53, said he had not yet made up his mind whether he would extend his term for a fourth year.

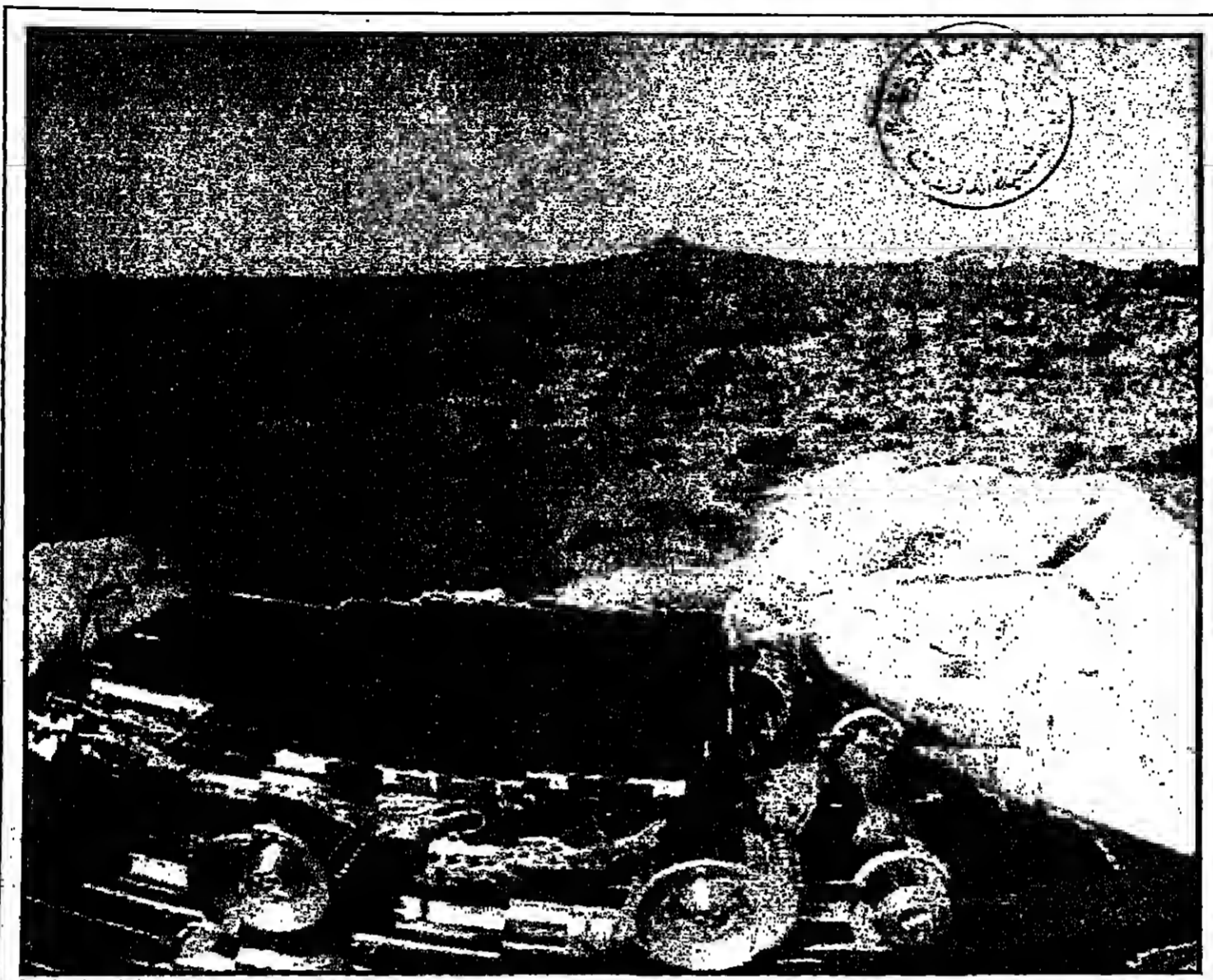
But he also said he believed that the aging of the senior command in the IDF was bad for the military.

Immediately after Netanyahu's victory last year, rumors surfaced that Shahak and other top members of the general staff, such as Deputy Chief of Staff Maj-Gen. Matan Vilna'i, 54, would resign if Yitzhak Mordechai was named defense minister.

After his appointment, Mordechai, who had earlier been angered at Vilna'i and Shahak for taking posts he had wanted in the military, made great efforts to diffuse tensions with the general staff and has developed good working relations with them.

The speculation is that despite past grievances, Mordechai will have no choice but to recommend to the government that Vilna'i replace Shahak.

Another possible candidate is OC Planning Branch Maj-Gen. Shaul Mofaz, a former OC Southern Command.



The Mars Pathfinder rover vehicle and an impact-stopping airbag are shown on the surface of Mars in this image from NASA, transmitted to Earth from the Mars Pathfinder probe Friday. A section of the airbags on the right has blocked the path of the rover's exit ramp, delaying its deployment. (AP)

Stalled rover vehicle only glitch so far in Mars landing

By JANE E. ALLEN

PASADENA, California (AP) - After happily receiving the first images sent from Mars in two decades, NASA scientists scrambled yesterday to fix a problem with the pride and joy of the Pathfinder spacecraft: its little rover.

The communications problem between Pathfinder and the six-wheeled Sojourner emerged late Friday, hours after a flawless and dramatic landing on the cold surface of the red planet after a seven-month journey of 500 million km.

If the problem isn't fixed, engineers may not be able to drive Sojourner around the Martian surface via remote control, rover manager Jacob Matijevic said. NASA has hoped that the rover would record chemical information about rocks and soil on Mars, the first step in its search for signs of ancient life on the planet.

Pathfinder, the first US spacecraft on Mars in

21 years, has already sent back strikingly clear pictures of a rust-colored, boulder-strewn plain. The highly anticipated journey of the rover had been delayed anyway. One of the airbags that cushioned Pathfinder's free fall didn't retract properly, blocking the rover's pioneering roll to Martian soil.

"The great galactic ghoul had to get us somewhere and apparently the ghoul has decided to pick on the rover," said Donna Shirley, the Mars exploration program manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and head of the team that created the rover.

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Astronauts itching to go to Mars, Page 2

TV: Apartments for haredi needy went to those with political ties

Forty percent of the apartments in Ramat Shlomo, a haredi neighborhood in Jerusalem, were sold to people ineligible for Housing Ministry assistance, including individuals close to the heads of non-profit organizations that marketed the homes, costing the state some NIS 150 million, Channel 1 reported Friday night.

The project was launched during Ariel Sharon's term as housing minister, and while United Torah Judaism MK Avraham Ravitz

served as deputy housing minister. The land for the project was marketed through seven Orthodox or haredi non-profit organizations, all but one of which had political connections.

The report raised suspicions against all but one of the groups - a Habad organization - that the apartments were sold to those who were ineligible. It is believed the homes were sold by making up names and by using names of eligible individuals.

The report said the homes were sold to those close to the heads of the organizations, their families and friends. These homes were sold at below-market prices due to government subsidies that should only have gone to eligible individuals. Channel 1 reported that among those who benefitted were relatives of Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai and the head of the National Religious Party's Jerusalem

office, Yehuda Levinger. The report said some of the individuals subsequently sold their homes for the full market price and made a profit. Some of the homes were also allegedly sold to foreigners.

MK Ran Cohen, chairman of the Knesset Control Committee, yesterday asked the attorney-general to investigate the dealings of the seven non-profit organizations.

See APARTMENTS, Page 10

Assad: Clinton can achieve Mideast peace

CAIRO - Syrian President Hafez Assad says he is confident that US President Clinton can help achieve peace in the Middle East.

Asked about the stalled peace process, Assad told Al-Ahram newspaper yesterday that one could not have expected anything better when the Israeli leadership "does not attach significance to a principle, an international decision or an ethical law." The problem is that Israel has convinced American politicians that it is an "oasis of democracy" in the region, but at the same time a "weak entity facing the Arab power," he said.

Still, Assad said, he has "confidence in President Clinton, and I am sure he wants peace and wants to achieve it. And I still believe that he can do that."

"The real problem lies in ourselves as Arabs, in our positions, in our capabilities, which we don't use and don't want to use," Assad said. "The fault lies with us, not with our enemy." Assad also claimed that Syria thwarted a "conspiracy" to divide Iraq after the Gulf War. He said the time is "not ripe" to divulge the details, "but I say it frankly, without Syria's efforts, Iraq would have been divided." Assad did not elaborate or say who the conspirators were. AP

Israeli's 30m. Coke is the real thing

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES - Good old Israeli ingenuity has triumphed again and will be introduced to the world media tomorrow evening, when Las Vegas unveils its latest mind-boggling landmark.

It is a 30-meter-high Coca-Cola bottle, a new world record, encasing two elevators that take visitors to the fourth story of a "showcase mall" dedicated to the World of Coca-Cola.

The giant bottle's exterior, festooned with thousands of flashing bulbs and neon, will light up the Las Vegas Strip. On the bottle's inside, folks riding the elevators will be treated to "sounds of

crackling ice, pouring soda and a sound track of dynamic Coca-Cola jingles," revealed a breathless Coca-Cola all-points bulletin from Atlanta headquarters.

The Israeli contribution is on the third floor, where the "Contours of Art" exhibit will "showcase folk art traditions from around the world, in the form of oversized, three-dimensional Coca-Cola bottle shapes."

Following a global competition, the top 15 "sculptures" were selected by "a professional panel and public vote."

Carrying the colors for Israel is Zohar Gabay, a graphic design student from Tel Aviv. His 2.5-meter "mosaic sculpture," featuring

the Coca-Cola logo in Hebrew letters, won the judges' admiration as "one of the collection's high-lights," according to an enthusiastic Coca-Cola spokeswoman.

Specifically, she revealed, Gabay's entry "features mosaic tiles in natural colors, placed on a polyurethane bottle foundation. The mosaic technique combines art forms and messages connected with ancient Israel, Greek art and modern times. Several Israeli symbols are prominent, including the Star of David and the Israeli flag."

Lest cynical minds suspect that the unique exhibit is but a commercial promotion for you-know-what, the "rationale," described in a "fact sheet," cites a loftier purpose: "The Coca-Cola contour bottle has been, and continues to be, a source of inspiration for artists around the world. Folk and indigenous art is part of the fabric of life everywhere, and so is Coca-Cola. The exhibit celebrates the traditions and heritage of everyday life, using the Coca-Cola bottle as a symbol of friendship and sharing." On opening night, the 30-meter bottle will be uncapped "followed by a dramatic display of fireworks shot out of the bottle." Ordinary gawkers have to wait until Tuesday morning to pay their \$5 admission (\$3 for children) and discover the wonderfully commercial World of Coca-Cola.

PM: Peace process in danger

By JAY BUSHINSKY, MARGOT DUDKEVITCH and news agencies

The peace process is in serious danger because of the ongoing violence in Hebron and the intermittent clashes in the Gaza Strip's Gush Katif, according to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Stressing the grave political impact of these events, Netanyahu told the cabinet Friday that Israel's effort to resume bilateral negotiations and renew joint security operations is imperiled by the events in Hebron.

He charged that the Palestinian Authority not only has "done nothing to prevent the Hebron outbreaks, but it also organized the Gush Katif clashes."

"Very sharp messages were sent to the Palestinians on this matter, through the security establishment as well as by other means," a cab-

behind the scenes with the Palestinians on a package deal that will enable them to resume their stalled peace negotiations.

He said the main obstacle was the violence in Hebron.

"We have sent them a very clear message that with the violence there just won't be a solution," Naveh told Channel 1.

A harsh warning was also issued by OC Judea and Samaria Maj-Gen. Gabi Ophir.

"Whoever throws a bomb with the intention of killing someone will also meet his death," Ophir told Army Radio on Friday.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's aide Nabil Abu Rudeineh said on Friday that Netanyahu had "provoked the Palestinian masses by assaulting their rights, stealing land, and widening settlements."

No IDF soldiers or border policemen were injured in Hebron, but Palestinians claimed that 15 rioters were wounded on Friday and yesterday, a youth was hit in the chest by a rubber bullet and a woman was hit by stones allegedly thrown at her by settlers.

The IDF Spokesman said that on Friday morning troops set up roadblocks outside Hebron to prevent Palestinians from other areas from entering the HI area. The spokesman stressed, however, that residents of Hebron were free to enter or leave the city. In addition, some of the joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols were stopped, the spokesman said.

Scores of Palestinians rioted on Friday morning in the cashah and Shalalaha Road area, throwing bottles of acid, stones and fire-bombs at IDF troops and Border Police.

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inet communique said.

Netanyahu said his government is "anxious" to get on with the stymied final status talks, "but it is not willing to accept street violence as a norm which takes place while negotiations are under way."

The government has warned the PA of a stronger military response unless it puts an end to the violence.

Netanyahu telephoned US President Bill Clinton on Friday and briefed him on the violence in Hebron.

Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh, meanwhile, said yesterday that the government is negotiating

Levy to decide soon whether to stay

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Foreign Minister David Levy is expected to decide today or tomorrow whether to remain in the government or quit.

Levy took part in Friday's cabinet meeting, which Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's senior policy adviser David Bar-Ilan described as "a very amiable session" adding: "I think it's just a matter of tying up the loose ends" about the lingering crisis.

Netanyahu is waiting for Levy's answer concerning the latter's plans, before presenting his new cabinet to the Knesset tomorrow, and hopes to end the crisis by then.

The two are expected to meet today to finalize the agreement

between them, although no meeting had been scheduled by last night and the two were not in touch over the weekend, during which Levy was at home and did not deal with politics.

Close aides of Netanyahu and Levy held intensive meetings at the end of last week in an effort to settle the issues at the heart of the crisis. This includes Levy's authority and responsibility vis-a-vis the peace process, which Levy is demanding to lead, implementing the coalition agreement with Geshet, i.e. appointing a deputy finance minister instead of MK David Magen, who resigned, and making Levy partner to the debate on the next state budget.

See LEVY, Page 10



509007

Bosnian president threatened with impeachment

By JOVANA GEC

PALE (AP) — In the gravest leadership crisis since the Bosnian war ended, lawmakers allied with the Bosnian Serbs' wartime leader demanded yesterday that President Biljana Plavsic revoke her decree dissolving Parliament or face impeachment.

All 47 deputies present at the session voted for the proposed parliament conclusions, which present the first step in their bid to unseat Plavsic.

Plavsic became president in internationally monitored elections after Karadzic, a war crimes suspect, was forced to step down last year under the US-brokered peace agreement that ended Bosnia's 3 1/2-year war.

Karadzic and his surrogates reject the Dayton peace accords, which call for a Bosnia made up of a Serb sub-state and a federation of Croats and Muslims. They want independence and eventual union with neighboring Serbia. Plavsic, a strong Serb nationalist in her own right, is more willing to work with the Muslims and

Croats.

Charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity by an international tribunal, Karadzic was forced from office under the peace treaty's terms. However, he remains a dominant force among the Bosnian Serbs.

During parliamentary discussions yesterday broadcast live on Bosnian Serb television, the parliament asked the Constitutional Court to rule on Plavsic's decision to dissolve Parliament.

"If the president does not accept these conclusions we will start the legal and constitutional process for the impeachment," the lawmakers said. They urged Plavsic to resign, portraying her as a traitor to Serb interests and praised Karadzic.

Lawmaker Momir Tomic lauded Karadzic, calling him "the man who created Republika Srpska and Serb knights," an apparent reference to Serb soldiers during the Bosnian war.

"We can never forgive Mrs. Plavsic for hating him," However, parliament still was short of the number of deputies needed to make major decisions

yesterday, such as ousting the president. The session may drag on for days for that reason.

Plavsic opponents waited for deputies from the Bosnian Serb branch of the Serbian Socialists, led by President Slobodan Milosevic, who opposes Plavsic.

The Bosnian Serb government, also loyal to Karadzic, rejected Plavsic's call for an urgent session today, Premier Gojko Kljickovic told reporters near Karadzic's stronghold of Pale.

Plavsic issued the decree dissolving parliament Thursday.

Allies of Karadzic said the order was illegal and on Friday declared the assembly to be in "permanent session." The leadership crisis erupted over Interior Minister Dragan Kijac, whom Plavsic tried to fire last weekend, accusing him of smuggling items at Karadzic's behest. She was then detained by Serbian police in Belgrade — signs of Karadzic's power and his close ties to Milosevic.

Several thousand people gathered in Banja Luka Friday to support her. More rallies were planned for last night.



British soldiers stand guard yesterday near Portadown's Drumcree Church, which is expected to be the focal point for the Orange march today. (Reuters)

Soldiers encircle showdown town in Northern Ireland

By SHAWN POGATCHNIK

PORTADOWN (AP) — British soldiers threw a cordon of armored cars around this showdown town yesterday as the government agonized over whether to permit a Protestant march through Portadown's main Catholic neighborhood.

Catholic protesters along Garvaghy Road have vowed to block today's annual march by the Orange Order, Northern Ireland's main pro-British Protestant fraternal group.

Last year, the confrontation triggered Northern Ireland's most widespread rioting in a generation.

Mo Mowlam, the British minister responsible for governing Northern Ireland, and Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan, commander of the 12,000-strong police force, continued to seek a compromise yesterday in behind-the-scenes tagging with Orange leaders.

"The government is doing everything possible to reach an agreement in Northern Ireland," said Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was in his northern English parliamentary district. He appealed for "the voice of reason" to prevail.

If no compromise can be reached, Mowlam must decide whether to deploy the predominantly Protestant police to block the Orangemen, or to clear away several hundred Catholic protesters who would try to sit down on the road. The government has set no deadline for making a decision.

Having concluded that the Catholic side was unwilling to let even a token number of Orangemen parade, she focused her efforts on the Orange side.

Orangemen insist Catholics shouldn't be offended by their march, which goes to a rural Anglican church north of Portadown and features a remembrance service for Protestants slain

at the Battle of the Somme in World War I. The parade normally passes the Catholic homes on its return to Portadown.

But Catholics see marches that pass near their areas as demonstrations of Protestant superiority. And Orange leaders have refused to meet the leader of the Garvaghy Road protesters — an Irish Republican Army ex-convict, Brendan MacCionnaith, who says the Orangemen are as despicable as Ku Klux Klansmen.

Orange leaders revealed yesterday that they did meet with two Catholic clerics from the Garvaghy Road protest committee on June 21.

Denis Watson, county grand master of the Orange Order, said in that meeting and in other discussions, "I have gone as far as I possibly can with, and as near as I possibly can to, the residents' coalition." One of the Catholic clerics, Jesuit priest Eamon Stack, accused Watson of

breaking his word that the face-to-face meeting would be "totally confidential."

The presence of so many soldiers on key road junctions ringing Portadown yesterday indicated that the 19,000-strong army garrison in Northern Ireland is likely to play a larger role than it did last year in policing any march-related confrontations.

Their faces swabbed in camouflage paint and toting heavy packs and SA-80 assault rifles, the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Guards patrolled the country lanes leading away from the church. Their imposing Saxon armored cars and lighter Land-Rovers monitored traffic coming from both directions into Garvaghy Road.

Overhead two Royal Air Force helicopters kept a watch on the town, whose streets were largely deserted. The Portadown Times headline announced, "Town Holds Its Breath."

'On the Road' reporter Charles Kuralt dies at 62

NEW YORK (AP) — Charles Kuralt, the avuncular television newsman whose *On The Road* reports celebrated offbeat America — from unicyclists to horse traders to gasoline-pumping poets — has died at 62.

Kuralt died Friday night at New York Hospital from complications from lupus, an inflammatory disease that can affect the skin, joints, kidneys and nervous system.

Kuralt made a career of searching for the insignificant

and elevating it to prose and visual poetry. "He connected to the essence of America better than any woman or man of his generation," former CBS News president Howard Stringer said.

He kept pitching the idea of a television show celebrating the life of America's back roads to CBS until a three-month trial in 1967 was agreed.

The first stop *On the Road* was Vermont for a piece on the fall foliage, with this Kuralt narration: "It is death that caus-

es this blinding show of color, but it is a fierce and flaming death."

"To drive along a Vermont country road in this season is to be dazzled by the shower of lemon and scarlet and gold that washes across your windshield."

Kuralt stayed *On the Road* for the following 13 years, logging up to 80,000 kilometers a year on back roads and byways with a two-man camera crew, wearing out half a dozen campers.

Astronauts itching for chance to explore Mars

CAPE CANAVERAL — If the US space agency needs a few volunteers to fly to Mars, it need look no further than the crew of the space shuttle Columbia.

"I'll sign up for the program any day they pass that sign-up sheet around," shuttle commander James Halsell Jr. said just before the Mars Pathfinder spacecraft landed on the red planet. "I'd go in a second," added astronaut Donald Thomas.

Halsell, meanwhile, chatted briefly with Mir astronaut Michael Foale yesterday morning by ham radio. Columbia and Russia's crippled space station Mir were passing within 240 km of one another when contact was made — twice.

On their fifth day in space, the astronauts worked on combustion and metal experiments and set more small fires to observe the behavior of flames in weightlessness.

A Progress spacecraft carrying an emergency repair kit for the crippled Mir meanwhile blasted off from Russia's Baikonur cosmodrome yesterday morning.

The supplies aboard the unmanned Progress M-35 include oxygen, food and water for the Russian-American crew as well as the tools needed to save the station after it lost up to half its electric power in a collision on June 25.

Flight operators gathered in front of screens at mission control in Korolyov near Moscow applauded when Progress separated from the booster at around 200 km up after the blast-off from the cosmodrome in the Kazakh steppe.

"The launch of the cargo spacecraft has taken place. We have only one comment on the start and first orbit, a small part of the solar battery did not open fully," flight com-

mander Vladimir Solovyov told a news briefing.

"But that doesn't influence Progress' flight in any way," Solovyov said the craft would dock automatically. "We will follow Progress carefully today and prepare it for docking, scheduled for Monday July 7 at 0959 Moscow time."

It was during a practice docking maneuver with another Progress cargo craft last month that the Spektr module, one of half a dozen components now making up the 11-year-old station, was holed and one of four solar panels on it smashed.

Experts say the overall lack of power on Mir will make the docking operation for Progress problematic.

Even then, the three men aboard the station still face a long and uncomfortable wait of nearly two

weeks before attempting risky electrical repairs during a spacewalk.

But the new supplies will be welcome, not least because they contain parcels from home. American astronaut Michael Foale lost most of his kit in the crash and has asked NASA to send him a new toothbrush.

Crew commander Vasily Tsibilyev's first question during a radio link-up yesterday was how the launch went. "It's O.K.," a mission control official told him.

Solovyov said repairs had been completed to the gyroscopic systems that keep Mir's energy-giving solar panels lined up to the Sun as it hurtles round the Earth. In their absence, the cosmonauts had to fire their rocket engines periodically.

"Last night we mended malfunctions in the navigation system. Now the gyroscopes are beginning to rotate," Solovyov said. "Mir's electricity supply is all right as are living conditions for the cosmonauts. Today the crew woke earlier than usual [preparing for the launch] but we will give them more rest time today and tomorrow." (News agencies)

Solana makes no promises on future NATO expansion

MADRID (Reuters) — NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana made no promises yesterday ahead of the NATO summit on a timetable for future expansion of the alliance.

He said NATO would invite three to five formerly communist central European nations to join at the Madrid summit starting on Tuesday.

Those excluded from the first round of expansion are pressing for a firm date for a second phase.

"There is no commitment, not today, maybe tomorrow," Solana told reporters in Madrid after a meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. "There will be another summit in 1999 to evaluate it."

At the Madrid summit, NATO will try to adapt its structure to the changes in Europe and maintain its dominance over security on the continent into the 21st

century. Twelve countries have asked to join but the United States wants only three at this stage — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

France and Italy, backed by European allies, want Romania and Slovenia to be included as well.

Solana pledged to keep the door open to others in the future, saying Madrid would be the start of the process, not the completion.

Some countries rejected for the initial expansion want a firm date set for their inclusion in 1999 or 2000.

Solana said NATO leaders would probably meet again in 1999 to formally admit the new members invited to join next week and to evaluate the possibility of further expansion.

What NATO will offer those left out is cooperation to the

framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), a new organization created to meet the security worries of those countries.

"Out of this alliance and out of this summit, everybody will be a winner from the point of view of security. No country will be a loser," Solana said.

"We are not going to create new divisions in Europe. To the contrary, we are going to erase them."

US President Bill Clinton arrived with his wife Hillary in the Spanish island of Majorca yesterday for a weekend vacation with the king and queen of Spain, ahead of the summit which Clinton is scheduled to attend.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia greeted the Clintons at the airport and the four then toured a 14th century castle on the popular holiday island.

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Strike out stigma of mental illness

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

Although biological explanations for psychiatric disorders are increasingly being discovered, the emotionally disturbed and their families are too often treated by society as lepers. Psychiatric hospitals and clinics are at the bottom of the financing totem pole; this fact that mental health services are still not in the basket of services covered by health funds, even though they were supposed to have been included in June 1995. Inclusion would not only mean an injection of additional state money for mental health services; it would also give emotional illness equal status with any organic disease, and thereby help reduce the stigma attached to patients and their relatives.

"The public should not regard the mentally disturbed as 'them' but potentially as 'us,'" declared Prof. Mordechai Shani, director-general of Sheba Hospital and a former Health Ministry director-general, who spoke recently at the first-ever Beit Hanassi symposium on the emotionally disturbed and their families. It was attended by President Ezer Weizman and his wife Reuma (who moved to sit among the audience and took notes). Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai and Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri.

"At some time in their lives, one out of four Israelis will suffer from either a chronic mental illness or an acute emotional disorder such as depression," said Shani, who admitted that in his two terms as ministry director-general he was "too busy with the macro of health policy to delve into the micro of mental-health services." But during the past two years at Sheba, he has invested much time in the problem. The increasing pressures of globalized economies, unemployment and the erosion of family ties will only increase anxiety and depression, he warned.

Shani quoted sources showing that in ancient Greece, as well as among Jews during the period of the Mishna, the mentally ill were regarded with compassion. But this changed with the increasing power of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. The disturbed were seen as "evil" — either witches or people upon whom a "spell" was cast. "The only way to deal with these people was to persecute them, put them in chains or even burn them at the stake, he said. This attitude of rejection, suspicion and fear, although moderated, persists even today, and patients and their families still suffer stigma.

Shani noted that researchers have found many connections between neurotransmitters — chemical messengers in the brain — and numerous mental disorders, from schizophrenia to obsessive-compulsive behaviors. Although there are also psychological elements in these disorders, there is no denying the organic factor. This is borne out by the fact that new drugs improve many patients' conditions and allow them to be discharged from hospitals and treated in community clinics.

Yisrael Eldar, chairman of the National Forum for Families of the Emotionally Disturbed, issued an emotional call for this large but forgotten group, who often feel on the verge of hopelessness. "When

"One out of four Israelis will suffer from either a chronic mental illness or an acute emotional disorder."

—Prof. Mordechai Shani

mental illness strikes, the family is in shock and enters a serious crisis, even complete paralysis, for days, weeks, months or even years. Relatives don't know what to do, what should or should not be done.

"Soon after a diagnosis, families find themselves on the fringes of society, ashamed and unaware where to seek help," Eldar said. "The emotionally disturbed are first and foremost human beings whose illness is only one facet in their existence, and they have many other sides to them," he declared. Decision-makers sometimes show insensitivity and even complete heartlessness when asked to fund funds for mental health services, which receive very low priority, he added. Physical conditions in the institutions often violate human dignity, said Eldar.

Psychiatric hospitals get much less funding than general hospitals; rehabilitation facilities are meager; and disability allowances for the mentally ill are canceled as soon as the patient reaches retirement age and replaced by the significantly lower old-age allowance. Eldar called on the ministries to join together for joint

action and remedy this situation: the Health Ministry to supervise better and ensure quality of treatment; the Housing Ministry to build hostels for discharged patients; the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry to set up rehabilitation facilities in the community; the Education Ministry to help patients complete their education; and the Finance Ministry to increase funding.

Benizri, who conceded many of the charges against the system, said the ministry hopes that finally, on January 1, 1998, it will be able to hand over responsibility for providing psychiatric services to the health funds. However, since this will require an additional tens of millions of shekels, the final decision is out up to the Health Ministry, said its chief of mental-health services Dr. Ze'ev Kaplan. Asked to comment, a Treasury spokesman said it was up to the Health Ministry to find the necessary funds in its own annual budget for this transfer to take place, unless the cabinet made a decision about special allocations.

Yishai said he looked forward to receiving the recommendations of a committee he appointed several months ago on proposals for a bill setting down the rights of the disabled, including the emotionally disturbed. "I would be willing for it to be implemented over a longer period of five or six years if only we passed in one piece," the minister said.

A moving and detailed plea for respecting the rights of the individual was sounded by Tel Aviv University philosophy professor Asa Kasher. "They should be treated not as people requiring favors but as citizens with rights," he declared. The key principle of democracy is not the rule of the majority, but acting fairly and respecting the views and rights of minorities and of all people, regardless of their beliefs, sex, color, ethnic origin or religion. "If my friend, or fellow citizen, has a problem that he can't solve himself, it is my problem as well. Society has to help him overcome it," said Kasher.

A reminder that society was not doing enough to solve the problems of the emotionally disturbed was just across the street from Beit Hanassi: a demonstration by dozens of sign-bearing public-sector psychologists, who have been striking for more than six weeks over their meager wages. All agree that they are embarrassingly underpaid, but the Treasury refuses to hike their salaries because it would supposedly knock the collective agreement out of synch.

Rx FOR READERS



(Starphoto)

Protection from the sun

By POST HEALTH REPORTER

Does wearing lipstick protect lips against the ultraviolet rays that cause skin cancer? Do self-tanning lotions protect against it? **B.T., Tel Aviv.**

Prof. Sarah Brenner, chief of dermatology, Ichilov Hospital, Tel Aviv.

Lipstick can protect against UV, but only if it is marked as containing anti-UV agents. Self-tanning lotions make the skin darker, but they do not contain anti-UV agents. If you go out in the sun with artificially tanned skin, you need to use UV screens over it.

I am 79 and suffer more than most people from insect bites. If there is a roomful of people and one mosquito flying around, I will be the one to get bitten. I have tried many anti-bite preparations and they don't help. I have tried using garlic internally and externally, which put off my wife, but even garlic didn't keep the mosquitoes at bay. Is there any change of diet, an addition of a certain element or something that will reduce what is an apparently appetizing smell emanating from my body? **S.D., Haifa.**

Prof. Yoel Margalit, director

of the Center for Biological Control in the life sciences faculty of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, replies:

Some people are especially attractive to biting insects as their body produces a special blend of metabolites that emanate constantly from their skin and attract the females.

Only female mosquitoes pursue you, as they need your blood — or specifically, a protein in it — for laying their eggs; male mosquitoes feed on nectar. The domestic mosquito, common in Israel, prefers human blood, but may make do with that of some animals. Certain types of mosquitoes prefer the blood of birds or of some warm-blooded mammals.

You apparently produce a perfect blend of these metabolites, such as carbon dioxide, lactic acid and uric acid.

This blend is different in each person, but when they're perfect for the female mosquito, they will come after you. Changing your diet or taking special supplements won't affect the blend.

Perfumes won't mask them. Taking frequent showers or baths won't help either, because the metabolites are constantly released by the skin.

Although this has no relation to you, some mosquitoes are especially attracted by women at certain times in their menstrual period. Specific temperatures trigger a biting reflex. Many mosquitoes prefer temperatures of 37° Celsius, so if a kettle with warm water is that temperature, a mosquito may try to "bite" it as well.

So what can you do? You'll have to try all the various mosquito repellents on the market, including those based on natural substances, such as eucalyptus. I guarantee that one of them will work. These repellents serve as a block between the metabolites and the mosquitoes. You'll have to re-apply it every five hours or so for it to be effective.

Rx For Readers welcomes queries from readers about medical problems. Experts will answer those we find most interesting, and replies will be printed in the twice-monthly column on the Health Page. Write Rx For Readers, The Jerusalem Post, POB 81, Jerusalem 91000, fax to 02-5389527 or e-mail it to juste@post.co.il, giving your initials, age and place of residence. Phoned-in queries will not be accepted.



Two blind children get a first-hand encounter with the animals in a Society for the Protection of Nature zoo in Tel Aviv. (Vera Etzion)

Steps to overcome stairs

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

One would think that a country with 500,000 physically disabled citizens would be sensitive to their difficulties in getting around public buildings, parks, hotels and workplaces. But in fact, so much has yet to be done to make these places accessible to people in wheelchairs, and to make life easier for the hearing disabled and the blind, that it would cost some NIS 500 million to carry out the necessary renovations over several years.

The Joint Distribution Committee is at the forefront of a nationwide public effort to ease the already heavy burden of the disabled, so they can function independently and contribute to the society as functional, working and taxpaying citizens.

"We began the project in 1993," recalls Avi Ramot, director of JDC's branch for populations with special needs, "by pushing for nature and tourism areas to be accessible to the disabled. I don't think the problem is opposition to helping the disabled, but a general lack of awareness of their problems. A population that worries about those who need help is a mature, humane society."

The pioneer in establishing easy access to these groups was Neot Kedumim, the national biblical nature reserve near Modi'in, whose expansive but rough terrain required substantial work so that wheelchairs could roll over its meandering paths.

Other tourist locations now being made accessible include the Beit She'an archeological digs, Masada, the Avshalom (Sialactite) Cave and Tzipori. The Hebrew University's Mt. Scopus campus is working to become the first in the country with complete access to blind students and serve as a model for other universities. The Recanati Israel

National Science Museum in Haifa has launched a project to make it accessible to all visually and hearing impaired visitors.

"For decades, all building plans in the US have had to ensure access to the disabled," Ramot says. "But things have gone much more slowly in Israel. The law now requires designs for various public buildings to have accessibility built in, but since fines are not included, the regulations are not easily enforced."

"There are two categories of new public buildings — clinics, museums, government offices, hospitals and so on, where accessibility is required, and factories, for example, where it is not. And the law doesn't force existing buildings and facilities to upgrade themselves. Only now is the Standards Institution working on mandatory standards."

Instead of fighting public institutions on an individual basis, the JDC is working in close cooperation with the Israel Council of Local Authorities, which coordinates all the municipalities and local councils. "They are ready to ensure that new buildings can be used by the disabled, but they need professional help. Therefore, we have opened a special course to train accessibility specialists; only lawyers, engineers, architects or technical building engineers may apply," explains Ramot.

The local authorities themselves will cover their salaries. He notes that there are only five such experts working around the country so far; the course will add another 15.

Five municipalities have set up model projects for accessibility with the JDC, in Givatayim, Haifa, Eilat, Dimona and Kfar Sava. Ramot praises their efforts to improve the quality of life of the disabled. He especially cites Givatayim, which is going to be the first city in the country in which all major public buildings are accessible.

The JDC has organized symposia on the subject for architects, architecture students and government officials, and has also carried out a comprehensive survey of accessibility. A computerized data base with 1,500 sites has been collected, with information available from the JDC at POB 3489, Jerusalem 91034, or by calling (02) 678-7454.



The Biblical Landscape Reserve has paved its pathways in order to make the site accessible to the disabled. (Vera Etzion)

"lips" that allow those in wheelchairs to cross the street easily, and keeping traffic lights to inform the blind when they can safely cross. Eilat also deserves commendation, he says, for strict rules that are strictly enforced. Anyone caught parking in a place set aside for disabled drivers gets a double fine plus a sticker saying: "You wouldn't want to be in my shoes; don't park in my place."

Jerusalem has in recent years carried out strict enforcement of building laws for new construction. Ramot notes that by a special arrangement, any complaint about sidewalks inaccessible to wheelchairs is handled, and repairs made, within a day or two.

Ease in getting around is important not only for the many war disabled and civilians injured in road and work accidents, but also the elderly and parents pushing baby carriages and strollers. In addition, there are 400,000 Israelis with hearing disabilities and some 6,000 legally blind residents. "Technology is advancing rapidly and providing

ways for them to communicate and use public facilities with less difficulty," says Ramot, who holds degrees in social work, sociology and political science.

The JDC has developed an electronic kit that allows the hearing disabled to use communications facilities in hotels. It includes a device that lights up when a visitor is ringing the doorbell, and another to provide links to the hotel desk. The JDC wants hotels with up to 100 rooms to install such a kit in 4 percent of the rooms, with lower percentages needed for larger establishments.

"Accessibility is good for society. In Europe and the US, there are many groups that organize foreign trips for the disabled, and many would come if they knew their needs can be met here," Ramot says. "Not only will it increase tourism from abroad and allow Israel disabled to get around the country, thereby boosting the economy, but it is also humane, helping those with disabilities to get the most out of life and to contribute as much as they can."

HEALTH SCAN

Link found between skin conditions, infertility

By POST HEALTH REPORTER

Hirsutism, overweight and acne in teenage girls are a warning sign that they may suffer later from polycystic ovary syndrome and have serious fertility problems, according to a senior gynecologist at the Rahin Medical Center-Hasharon Campus.

At a recent conference of endocrinologists and dermatologists, Prof. Roy Homberg noted that dermatologists are often the first specialists girls consult in teenage years.

When the problem is too much hair on the body and acne, they should look into the possibility of this syndrome — a disorder marked by a failure to ovulate or menstruate and an inability to become pregnant.

It is caused by the endocrine gland getting out of balance, with higher levels of some hormones such as testosterone and estrogen and lower levels of follicle-stimulating hormone.

The latter causes the ovarian follicles to grow only partially,

and they do not release eggs, which causes many lumps to form.

The ovary often grows to twice the size of a normal ovary and is covered by a smooth, pearly-white capsule.

Treatment includes giving female hormones or surgical removal of the affected ovary.

Dermatologists should be on the lookout for the pattern of symptoms in early adolescence.

Proper treatment can save considerable misery, not only in dealing with infertility, but also with diabetes and high blood cholesterol, which in older women are also part of this syndrome.

Homberg, head of the Petah Tikva hospital's fertility unit and head of the obstetrics and gynecologist department at Tel Aviv University's Sackler Medical School, has been researching the syndrome for years.

It can be diagnosed with an ultrasound scan of the ovaries; hormonal tests are not needed to confirm it.

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CHANNEL 2

6:15 Today's programs, 6:30 News in Arabic, 6:31 News in Arabic...

CHANNEL 3

6:30 News flash, 6:31 News in Arabic, 7:00 Good Morning Israel...

CHANNEL 4

6:30 News flash, 6:31 News in Arabic, 7:00 Good Morning Israel...

CHANNEL 5

6:30 News flash, 6:31 News in Arabic, 7:00 Good Morning Israel...

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CHANNEL 2

10:30 Changed Lives, 11:00 The 700 Club, 11:30 Hour of Power...

CHANNEL 3

10:30 Changed Lives, 11:00 The 700 Club, 11:30 Hour of Power...

CHANNEL 4

10:30 Changed Lives, 11:00 The 700 Club, 11:30 Hour of Power...

CHANNEL 5

10:30 Changed Lives, 11:00 The 700 Club, 11:30 Hour of Power...

PRIME TIME TV

Table with columns for time slots (19:30, 20:00, 20:30, 21:00, 21:30, 22:00, 22:30, 23:00) and rows for various TV channels and programs.

RADIO

Table with columns for radio stations (BBC WORLD, EUROSPORT, STAR SPORTS, etc.) and rows for various programs and times.

MOVIES

Jerusalem G.G. Gil, Jerusalem Mail (Nutra) #678948, The Old Feeding-The Children 5, 7:15, 9:45...

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Magazine children may find amusing (5), 4 Left to play snooker... DOWN: 1 Phone one gentleman to cancel the deal (4,2,3)...

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers and some filled-in letters.

QUICK CROSSWORD: ACROSS: 1 Change (5), 4 Sections (6), 9 Dishevelled (7)...

SOLUTIONS

Quick Solution: ACROSS: 1 Cash, 9 Sharing, 5 Today, 10 Massive, 11 Eggs, 13 Baseball, 14 Atlanta, 16 Legacy, 28 Abominable, 30 Zap, 22 Evident, 23 Exact, 26 Register, 28 Denny, DOWN: 1 Catch, 3 Sed, 4 Humbug, 5 Absolute, 9 Hilarity, 7 Gently, 8 Dyle, 13 Gallows, 14 Amateur, 15 Maiden, 17 Mantle, 19 Ewer, 21 Petty, 24 Ace.

Quick Solution: ACROSS: 1 Charm (6), 2 Stolen (6), 3 Boisterous play (4), 5 Enlarge (8), 6 Slaughter (7), 7 Appeared (6), 8 Essential oil (5), 13 Round (8), 15 Righteous (7), 17 Talents (8), 18 Assisted (6), 19 Respect highly (6), 22 Egyptian capital (6), 23 Member (4).

IAF helps put out fire at Turkish munitions factory

PARIS (Reuters) - Two Israeli Air Force helicopters dropped water on a fire smoldering in the ruins of a Turkish munitions factory on Friday after a series of huge explosions the previous day that killed two people and caused widespread panic.

The US-made Sikorsky CH-53 helicopters partially doused the flames at the plant in the half-deserted central town of Kirikkale, 70 kilometers east of Ankara.

The military wing of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) claimed responsibility yesterday for the blasts.

"One of the urban brigades dependent on our staff headquarters undertook with success on July 3 an action against the Kirikkale machinery and chemicals factory which makes bombs of mass destruction," the general command of the National Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGL) said, in a statement received by a Western news agency in Paris.

"This action is a warning to the new government which has just been put in place to stop the war. If not, ARGL's capacity to strike military targets could target and paralyze economic and tourist sites," the statement said.

"We do not want the war to worsen, but we cannot remain indifferent to the successive attacks against our movement," the statement added.

The group's claim could not immediately be verified. The Paris-based Kurdistan Information Center said it could confirm, however, that

the statement had been issued by the ARGL.

The group said in its statement that it had targeted the plant because it made weapons used by Ankara to "destroy more than 3,000 Kurd villages."

"It is to eliminate the threat of new massacres that we successfully undertook such an action," the statement said.

Kirikkale Mayor Cemalettin Akdogan was quoted by the Anatolian news agency on Thursday as ruling out sabotage as a cause of the blast.

But new Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz later visited the town and said sabotage was a possible cause and that an investigation was under way.

The explosions at the munitions plant in the central Anatolian town of Kirikkale sent locals fleeing from the area. Thousands spent the night sleeping in their cars outside the town or camped out in nearby fields.

Blasts that sent flames 300 meters into the sky shook the town all day on Thursday, damaging houses, destroying the factory and causing damage estimated at \$6.7 million.

The Turkish deputy chief of general staff spoke to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on Friday, and thanked the IAF for the help. Mordechai said that the air force operation demonstrated that cooperation between Turkey and Israel was of a friendly and humanitarian nature and had no other motive.



An IAF helicopter pours water on the remnants of a fire at a weapons factory at Kirikkale on Friday. (AP)

WEATHER

Haifa	24-34
Tiberias	25-39
Afula	24-37
Samaria	23-31
Tel Aviv	25-30
Jerusalem	22-30
Beersheva	22-36
Dead Sea	30-41
Ellet	28-41

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear.

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH			
	C	F	C		
Amsterdam	12	54	20	68	rain
Berlin	13	55	24	75	cloudy
Buenos Aires	0	32	12	54	clear
Chicago	12	54	21	70	clear
Copenhagen	14	57	21	70	clear
Frankfurt	12	54	22	72	rain
Geneva	14	57	21	70	rain
Hong Kong	26	80	29	84	rain
Jakarta	28	82	19	66	partly cloudy
Lisbon	18	64	28	82	clear
London	12	54	20	68	cloudy
Los Angeles	19	66	32	90	clear
Moscow	13	55	28	82	partly cloudy
Mumbai	28	82	30	86	partly cloudy
New York	15	59	30	86	partly cloudy
Paris	14	57	20	68	cloudy
Rome	18	64	28	82	clear
Stockholm	18	64	28	82	clear
Tokyo	27	81	38	100	clear
Vienna	13	55	17	63	partly cloudy
Zurich	13	55	15	59	rain

Prosecutor wants murder conviction for Naharayim slayings

NAOUR, Jordan (AP) - Prosecutors yesterday asked a military tribunal to convict a Jordanian soldier of premeditated murder in the slaying of seven Beit Shemesh schoolgirls, a crime that carries a mandatory death sentence.

"How would you feel if the victims were your girls? Would you have glorified the killer?" chief prosecutor, Lt.-Col. Muhammad Hijazi, asked the five-judge tribunal in a speech to sum up his case.

The defendant, Cpl. Ahmed Dakamseh, is on trial for gunning down the girls March 13 on Naharayim island.

Hijazi said evidence presented during the five-week trial also implicated Dakamseh of "raising arms" against fellow soldiers who tried to overpower him as he opened fire from his guard post.

Dakamseh, who pleaded innocent, says he fired because the girls mocked and disturbed him as he prayed while on duty.

Hijazi said that Dakamseh asked for a rifle and extra ammunition on the day of the shooting, at the border territory of Naharayim, which Jordan leased to Israel under the 1994 peace treaty.

He said Dakamseh hinted at his plans to one of his army comrades on the morning of the killing and smiled at another as he loaded his rifle just seconds before opening fire.

Defense attorneys have tried to show that Dakamseh is mentally unstable in a bid to convince the court that the act was not premeditated but occurred during a fit of rage.

If convicted, Dakamseh, 26, will be executed.

In an emotional two-hour speech, Hijazi said Dakamseh "has deliberately killed the innocent Israeli girls."

Turning to Dakamseh in the dock, Hijazi asked: "What right did you have to shed innocent blood? Cold-bloodedly, treacherously and without any human feelings, you have taken innocent lives."

The case was adjourned until next Saturday, when the defense will wrap up its case.

The court has heard that Dakamseh suffered a personality disorder.

But while prosecution psychiatrists say the disorder did not cause mental instability, defense medical experts said such a condition could make patients unconscious of their acts. Dakamseh's family says he had fits of rage and tried to commit suicide several times in the past 15 years.

US court closes used-car Jewish charity

NEW YORK - In the latest scandal to hit the American Orthodox community, a California judge last week shut down a controversial San Francisco charity that raised millions of dollars by soliciting and auctioning used cars.

The Jewish Educational Center, set up to help Russian immigrants, became one of the largest used-car operations in the US by successfully appealing for cars in California and in metropolitan New York. The center enticed donors by suggesting that the value of the donated car qualified as a tax deduction.

The center then sold the cars at auction. According to financial statements filed by the center in February and reported by local newspapers, only \$1.5 million, or 17 percent, of the \$8.5m. it received in merchandise during the 1996-97 fiscal year was spent for charitable purposes.

The center is facing state and local charges including unfair business practices and false advertising. The group's radio advertising said 100 percent of donations went to charity. The state attorney general also accused the center's founders - Rabbi Bentzion Pil and his wife, Mattie Plotkin - of diverting some of the funds to buy a home and pay for their son's bar mitzva. Pil is originally from Uzbekistan; Plotkin is from Brooklyn. Their philosophy is Lubavitcher, although they reportedly have no links to Habad.

Federal authorities are investigating the center for possible mail fraud and money laundering, but no federal charges have been filed, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Orthodox communities in the US recently have been rocked by charges of criminal and financial scandals. Last month, two haredi rabbis were charged with laundering \$1.75 million in Colombian drug profits through the bank accounts of a yeshiva and synagogue in Borough Park, Brooklyn.

In May, federal prosecutors indicted six men from the haredi village of New Square, New York, on charges of bilking the US government of millions of dollars from housing and education programs. In December, the director of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Borough Park was charged with conspiring to steal more than \$600,000 worth of the council's funds.

Arab world reportedly working to mend fences

By DOUGLAS DAVIS

LONDON - Intensive diplomatic efforts are under way to convene a meeting of foreign ministers from Syria, Iran and Iraq, and to facilitate a rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The flurry of activity, inspired by Syrian diplomacy, is designed to create new regional alliances that will spearhead campaigns to halt the process of normalization with Israel and to neutralize the perceived threat posed by an Israeli-Turkish alliance.

The alliances will also effectively challenge Washington's policy of dual containment by increasing the profile of both Iraq and Iran and reducing their regional isolation.

The London-based daily *al-Quds al-Arabi* reported last week that attempts are being made to arrange an early "emergency meeting" among the foreign ministers of Syria, Iran and Iraq.

The paper quotes diplomatic sources as saying the intensified, upgraded and urgent contacts are

the result of evidence which demonstrates Israeli involvement in Turkey's military offensive in northern Iraq.

It is also the result of what the paper describes as an increasingly flexible approach to foreign policy by Iranian elements which favor an end to long-running disputes with Iraq.

These elements are expected to become more influential in the administration of Iranian president-elect Mohammed Khatami.

In a related development, the Arabic media - including the Saudi-owned media - reported last week that Iran and Saudi Arabia are signalling their intention to ease long-standing strains in their relationship and usher in an era of friendship and cooperation.

Much significance is being placed on a visit to Tehran last week by Saudi Minister of State Abdelaziz al-Khwaiter, who delivered messages from King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The Saudi daily *Ashraq al-Awsat* quoted Rafsanjani's deputy for parliamentary and legal affairs, Atallah Mohajerani, as saying the talks covered bilateral relations, the Islamic Conference Organization summit and the Middle East by Iranian elements which favor an end to long-running disputes with Iraq.

"Given the extremely sensitive conditions through which the region is passing," he said, "I think the visit of the Saudi leadership's special envoy can be considered to be purposeful and exceptional."

Mohajerani added that the meeting demonstrated Tehran and Riyadh were "determined to strengthen their bilateral bonds without hesitation" and to raise their level of cooperation.

The Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, he noted, could also "contribute to the resolution of many issues related to peace and security in the region, whether in the shared Gulf basin or in the wider Islamic world, foremost of which is the Palestine question."

Syria, Iran hold high-level talks in Damascus

DAMASCUS (Reuters) - Iranian Vice-President Hassan Habibi opened talks in Damascus yesterday with his Syrian counterpart Abdel-Halim Khaddam on Turkish-Israeli military cooperation and Ankara's military campaign in northern Iraq, officials said.

They said Habibi, accompanied by a high-ranking team including Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, will also discuss an economic conference grouping Arab countries and Israel in Qatar in November.

Syria and Iran have strongly opposed the conference.

Iranian officials said Iran would offer during the talks the holding of an alternative economic conference that would exclude Israel.

Officials said Habibi and Khaddam would clear the regular meeting of the supreme Syrian-Iranian joint commission which is assigned to promote bilateral cooperation between the two states.

During his stay in Damascus Habibi will meet Hizbullah leaders. He is also due to meet leaders of Palestinian factions which are opposed to the Israeli-PLO peace deal.

Syria and Iran, longtime allies which share borders with Turkey and Iraq, have expressed concern recently after several agreements between the military establishments in Israel and Turkey.

The two countries have also denounced Turkey's two-month-old incursion into northern Iraq in pursuit of rebel Kurdish guerrillas.

Artificial spinal disk implants now available here

By JUDY SIEGEL

Two men suffering from severe back pains due to a damaged spinal disk have become the first in Israel to undergo implantation of a synthetic disk made of plastic and metal.

The implants are not suited to everyone; it is intended only for those up to the age of about 50 who have not yet developed advanced degenerative changes in the spine and whose damaged disk is in the lower part of the back.

Prof. Jacob Nerubay, head of Sheba Hospital's unit for spinal deformities, led the surgical team, which performed the operation on two men, one 34 years old and the other 41.

The Tel Hashomer hospital was the first to request, and receive, Health Ministry permission to carry out the implantation.

So far, 1,000 such operations - pioneered in Germany and France - have been carried out in Europe. Until now, the main treatment for damaged disks has been to remove them, often followed by fusing of the spine,

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